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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Interior Landscapes: The Inversion of Dream and Reality in George MacDonald's Fairytales

by

Barbara Miron

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF Master of Arts

Department of English

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled Interior Landscapes: The Inversion of Dream and Reality in George MacDonald's Fairytales submitted by Barbara Miron in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

.....Patricia Demers.....

Supervisor

.....

.....

Date...1 October 1987....

Dedication

To express my deepest indebtedness, I can but cite George MacDonald's dedication from *A Hidden Life*:

> Take of the first fruits, [F]ather, of thy care,
> Wrapped in the fresh leaves of my gratitude,
> Late waked for early gifts ill understood.

Abstract

George MacDonald uses the genre of fantasy to convey his personal philosophy: an unorthodox and esoteric brand of Christianity. In his narratives, a fantastic secondary world borders on and intermingles with a "real" world of ordinary experience. MacDonald uses these two worlds to invert the standard definitions of dream and reality. For MacDonald, the "real" material world is only an ephemeral creation; and God, the Creator, is the eternal, unchanging, absolute standard of truth. In his fantasies, the fantastic world, the imaginary "dream," represents the inner realm of transcendent spiritual experience and, hence, is more real than the mundane primary world. This study examines the inverted value system in George MacDonald's fairytales in three successive stages. "The Synthetic Imagination" deals with the inception of faith, the moment of perception, the initial act of apprehending eternity. "Dying Into Life" discusses the effects of this revelation on the individual, the inner struggle between rival selves, one self-created, and another, newly emergent, being fashioned by God. "Forgotten Cornerstones" moves from the solitary to the social experience and looks at the prophetic role of the regenerated believer.

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I. Introduction

Our life is no dream, but it should
and will perhaps become one.

MacDonald's translation of Novalis

Born in 1824 into a devout Scottish Presbyterian family, George MacDonald grew up under the threat of an ominous Calvinist God. His son and sole biographer, Greville MacDonald, insists that the strict discipline in his father's home was tempered with love, but describes MacDonald's first teacher as a stern man who taught with the whip and the threat of eternal damnation and was allegedly responsible for the death of his younger brother James (*GMW*, 54, 60). MacDonald responded to this cruelty not, as might be expected, by rejecting all religion, but rather by embracing it more fully, by searching in the deepest recesses of his spirit for an alternative to the inexorable Calvinist God. After studying Chemistry and Natural Philosophy in his native Scotland, he enrolled in Highbury Theological College in London to prepare for the ministry. MacDonald's career as a pastor lasted less than two years. He was dismissed from his first parish at Arundel in 1853 as a result of his attempt to reinterpret Christianity. Unable to accept the Calvinist doctrine of election, the belief that all but a chosen few would be damned to Hell for eternity, MacDonald suggested to his congregation that a loving God would make provision for the heathen after death (*GMW*,178). Because he was an admirer and translator of the works of the German mystic Novalis, his disgruntled flock added the charge of being "tainted with German theology" to that of preaching heresy (*GMW*, 179). This harsh and unwarranted rejection reinforced MacDonald's desire to

surpass what he considered the superficial, formulaic beliefs of institutionalized Christianity and precipitated his writing career. In addition to being a new means to support his growing family, writing offered MacDonald a replacement for his pulpit. Ronald MacDonald remembers his father insisting on the necessity of the spiritual message in his work:

> . . . having begun to do his work as a Congregational minister, and having been driven
> . . . into giving up that professional pulpit, he was no less impelled than compelled to use the new platform whence he had found that his voice could carry so far.[1]

In "A Sketch of Individual Development," MacDonald declares that the sole truth of humanity, the telos of man's existence, is "oneness with God" (*DO*, 74). For the duration of his life, MacDonald wrote prolifically, always motivated by his desire to know God and make Him accessible to men.

MacDonald's literary career began with the publication of *Within and Without*,[2] a blank verse melodrama about a young monk who escapes from the constraints of his order to find a deeper revelation of God. The parallels between MacDonald's flight from Calvinism and the quest of his character, Julian, are obvious. While the other monks occupy

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[1] "A Personal Memoir," *From a Northern Window* (1911). Quoted in Reis, *George MacDonald*, 47. Greville MacDonald also notes that "the conviction that the world was so sorely in need of his message" was a strong motivating force in MacDonald's writing (*GMW*, 324).

[2] Greville describes a manuscript of juvenilia from MacDonald's student days in Scotland from which one blank verse poem entitled *David* was anonymously published in 1846 (*GMW*, 82). *Within and Without* was MacDonald's first acknowledged publication; enthusiastically received by reviewers, it launched his literary career (*GMW*, 221-23).

themselves with administrative duties and doctrinal debates, Julian is a renegade who questions the efficacy of the outward forms of religion:

> They talk,
> Of penance ! Let them talk when they have tried
> And found it has not even unbarred heaven's gate.
> (*PW*, I, 9)

The sensational narrative, in which Julian rescues his childhood sweetheart from the oppression of an evil count and flees to England, is interjected with numerous soul-searching soliloquies. Like MacDonald, Julian focuses on the inward spiritual experience and interprets outward experiences in terms of their effect on his relationship with God:

> Thy inmost speech is heart embracing heart;
> And thou wast all the time instructing me
> To know the language of the inmost speech.
> (*PW*, I, 53)

Although *Within and Without* has little literary merit, it is instructive in that the central impulse of MacDonald's later fiction, his desire for a mystical union with God, is expressed without artful disguise.

MacDonald conveyed his ideas in a variety of genres: poetry, prose essays, sermons, plays, realistic novels and fantasies. Although Douglas Thorpe arduously attempts to study MacDonald's "*oeuvre* as a whole" and cautions against "isolating one dimension of his work as the work of importance" (1), there is little doubt that his most significant contributions to literature are his fantasies for children and adults. Ironically, MacDonald's most

praised and most influential works were a sideline to his professional writing. C. S. Lewis ebulliently describes his discovery of *Phantastes: A Faerie Romance* (1858) as the beginning of new life and the equivalent of Dante's first sight of Beatrice (*GD*, 60). Roger C. Schlobin esteems MacDonald as "the 'father' of modern fantasy because of *Phantastes*."[3] Unfortunately, MacDonald's Victorian audience did not share this appreciation of his first book-length publication. George Murray Smith, MacDonald's publisher, praised *Phantastes* as "unique," but persuaded its author to abandon fantasy for novels with the argument that "nothing but fiction pays" (*GMW*, 318). After a period of struggle,[4] MacDonald took Smith's advice: his next work was a realistic novel, *David Elginbrod* (1863). Stephen Prickett's assessment of MacDonald's realistic novels sums up their value as literature: "They have long been out of print, and, on the whole, deservedly so" (*RR*, 227). In a study of historical trends in literature, C. S. Lewis laments MacDonald's unsuccessful attempt to express his spiritual ideas in a realistic genre:

> . . . a dominant form tends to attract to itself

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[3] *The Aesthetics of Fantasy Literature and Art*, xiii. Schlobin's opinion is shared by Kenneth J. Zahorski and Robert H. Boyer who describe *Phantastes* as "a -- perhaps *the* -- seminal work of modern fantasy." *Fantasy Literature: A Core Collection and Research Guide*, 131. As well, Diana Waggoner begins her chronology of modern fantasy with the publication of *Phantastes* in 1858. *Hills of Faraway: A Guide to Fantasy*, 65.

[4] Greville's description of this barren period is somewhat evasive: "the five years between the publication of *Phantastes* in 1858 and the first novel in 1863 were marked by what must have seemed to some like failure" (*GMW*, 319).

> writers whose talents would have fitted them much better for work of some other kind. Thus . . . a mystic and natural symbolist like George MacDonald is seduced into writing novels. (*AL*, 232)

After *Phantastes*, MacDonald wrote twenty-nine realistic novels, but only four book-length fantasies and a collection of short fairytales.[5] Although these works were considered peripheral during MacDonald's lifetime, they are solely responsible for his survival into the twentieth century.

Characteristics inherent in the genre of fantasy, the existence of a secondary world and the departure from empirical fact, make it a much more suitable medium for MacDonald's mysticism than the novel. J. R. R. Tolkien defines fantasy, not in terms of events in the plot, but by its setting: "the nature of *Faerie*: the Perilous Realm itself" (42). The reader becomes a participant in this imaginary setting through the agency of "Secondary Belief":

> What really happens is that the story-maker proves a successful 'sub-creator'. He makes a Secondary World which your mind can enter. Inside it, what he relates is 'true': it accords with the laws of that world. You therefore believe in it, while you are, as it were, inside. (60)[6]

MacDonald expresses a similar belief in the "The Fantastic Imagination": "man may, if he pleases, invent a little world of his own with its own laws" (*DO*, 314). For both Tolkien

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[5] *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871), *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872), *The Princess and Curdie* (1883) and *Lilith* (1895). MacDonald's shorter works of fantasy have been compiled in Glenn Edward Sadler's two volume collection *The Gifts of the Child Christ*.

[6] Tolkien insists that his "Secondary Belief" is not the equivalent of Coleridge's "willing suspension of disbelief" which is merely "a substitute for the genuine thing, a subterfuge we use when condescending to games or make-believe" (60).

and MacDonald, the value of the secondary world in fantasy is its potential to inspire spiritual insight. Tolkien states that fairy-stories precipitate "Recovery" of a clear view of the primary world, a freedom from "the drab blur of triteness or familiarity" (74). MacDonald also argues that fantasy should awaken the reader to "something deeper than the understanding": "Nature is mood-engendering, thought-provoking: such ought the sonata, such ought the fairytale to be" (*DO*, 320).

When MacDonald's characters travel in his secondary worlds, they gain spiritual insight akin to the recovery that Tolkien expects the reader of fantasy to receive. As Rolland Hein explains, MacDonald's fantastic settings transcend ordinary, mundane experience:

> Fairyland, a realm in the imagination, is a type of intermediate world between the world we know and the world of man's ultimate destination. It is a higher world, a world of glory and wonder. (143)

Adonos, the hero of *Phantastes*, awakes to discover a stream flowing in his ornately decorated bedroom which converts artificial imitations of nature into the real thing:

> . . . where this carpet, which I had myself designed to imitate a field of grass and daisies, bordered the course of the little stream, the grass-blades and daisies seemed to wave in a tiny breeze that followed the water's flow. (9)

Adonos follows this vital stream into Fairy Land where, through the course of his adventures, he is spiritually awakened into a mystical ecstasy and a profound love for humanity. When he is drawn back into the primary world, his memories of the secondary world are a source of inspiration

and comfort:

> I have a strange feeling sometimes, that I am a ghost, sent into the world to minister to my fellow-men. . . . When I am oppressed by any sorrow or real perplexity, I often feel as if I had only left [the wise woman's cottage in Fairy Land] for a time, and would return out ~~of the vision~~ into it again. (184)

Adonos' feeling that the real world is merely an illusory "vision" is shared by Mr. Vane in *Lilith*. Like Adonos, Vane's perception of the primary world is altered by his journeys to Fairy Land:

> Sometimes when I am abroad . . . the heavens and the earth, the trees and the grass appear for a moment to shake as if about to pass away; then, lo, they have settled again into the old familiar face! At times I seem to hear whisperings around me, as if some that loved me were talking of me. (251)

Vane is convinced that his mundane life is a dream from which he will someday awake:

> It may be . . . when most awake, I am only dreaming the more! But when I awake at last into that life which, as a mother her child, carries this life in its bosom, I shall know that I wake, and shall doubt no more. (252)

In MacDonald's fantasies, the primary worlds are mundane and, ultimately, false. The secondary worlds represent an eternal, spiritual realm and, hence, are more real than the primary worlds they border on.

The characters who visit MacDonald's secondary worlds learn to transcend empirically verifiable facts and experience a supernatural triumph over evil and sorrow. Tolkien calls this victory "*Eucatastrophe*":

> The consolation of fairy stories, the joy of the happy ending . . . denies (in the face of much evidence if you will) universal final defeat, and in so far is *evangelium*, giving a fleeting glimpse of Joy, Joy beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief. (81)

The Princess and the Goblin and its sequel, *The Princess and Curdie*, are set in a secondary world which is populated by goblins and an army of chimerical beasts. Yet this fantastic setting functions as a primary world in which the miners, the castle servants and the citizens of Gwyntystorm perform their domestic duties and dismiss anything not perceptible to the senses as nonexistent. Princess Irene's nurse, Lootie, for whom a goblin-sighting is an ordinary event, accuses Irene of "telling make-believes" when she discovers her supernatural "great-great grandmother" living in the castle towers (*PG*, 26). Queen Irene's rooms at the top of the stairs are an actual secondary world which is embedded into the ostensible secondary world. At first, Irene is torn between Lootie's skepticism and faith in the invisible, transcendent realm:

> Sometimes she came almost to the nurse's opinion that she had dreamed all about her[the grandmother]; but that fancy never lasted very long. (*PG*, 33)

Irene's faith in her mystical grandmother is tested when she is required to follow an invisible thread into the dangerous underground caverns of the goblins. She comes upon an insurmountable heap of stones and, for a moment, concludes that "she was forsaken indeed!" (*PG*, 138). When Irene thinks of "all that [her grandmother] had said to her, and how kind she was" (*PG*, 137), her fear vanishes:

> . . . once more she was certain her grandmother's thread could not have brought her there just to leave her there; and she began to throw away stones from the top as fast as she could. (*PG*, 140)

Because of her grandmother's tutelage, Irene is able to

overrule the empirical evidence of defeat and rescue Curdie, who is trapped behind the stones.

MacDonald's conviction that the invisible realm of the spirit is more tangible than the mundane world, which is perceptible to the senses, is a radical departure from the pervasive Victorian obsession with scientific knowledge. As Richard Altick explains, inner growth was only considered valuable as a means to a material end:

> Knowledge was power to build more productive machinery and raise one's wages so that one could enjoy a few of the comforts of life. It had nothing to do with cultivating the spirit or the imagination. (258)

Charles Dickens marvellously satirizes this pragmatic mentality in *Hard Times* as Thomas Gradgrind informs a class of school children that "Facts alone are wanted in life" (47). A product of Gradgrind's philosophy is a supercilious boy named Bitzer, who perceives a horse as a "Quadruped. Gramnivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisors" (50). When asked if he has an emotional heart, Bitzer replies "the circulation . . . . couldn't be carried on without one" (303). In "A Sketch of Individual Development," MacDonald calls the attitude exemplified by Dickens' Gradgrind "the killing power of a godless science" (*DO*, 60). MacDonald complains that quantitative analysis destroys the wonder and mystery in Nature, converting an awesome ocean-tempest into "a mere clashing of innumerable water-drops" (*DO*, 61). In "The Imagination: Its Functions and Its Culture," MacDonald reverses the priorities of his utilitarian contemporaries by

insisting that scientific fact should be a subordinate means to the ultimate end of union with God:

> To inquire into what God has made is the main function of the imagination. It is aroused by facts, is nourished by facts, seeks for higher and yet higher laws in those facts; but refuses to regard science as the sole interpreter of nature, or the laws of science as the only region of discovery. (*DO*, 2)

Fantasy, by the very definition of the word, is a flight from fact or, as Kathryn Hume expresses it, "any departure from consensus reality." Stephen Prickett sees Victorian fantasy as a marginalized "counter-tradition" reacting against an increasing emphasis on empiricism:

> In seeking to preserve and re-create a world we were in danger of losing, [fantasy] has also created far other worlds and other seas. By them we have been able to hold a mirror to the darker and more mysterious sides of our own. . . . (*VF*, xiii, xvi)[1]

The genre of fantasy, with its possibility for a supramundane secondary world, allows MacDonald to weave his theological ideas into the aesthetic structure of his works, rather than graft them on as interpolated sermons as he does in his novels.

The majority of modern scholars have interpreted fantasy by misconstruing psychological theories. Harold Bloom insists that literary fantasy cannot be separated from psychological processes of fantasy and divides fantasy from the realistic novel on the basis of Freud's two principles of mental functioning. The pleasure/pain principle, the

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[1] David Clayton makes the same observation in his argument that fantastic literature was a powerful weapon in "the attack upon commonsense realism [which] runs like a leit motive through the intellectual and artistic culture of the nineteenth century," *Bridges to Fantasy*, 75.

instinctive impulses of the unconscious, is the domain of fantasy, whereas the novel is motivated by the reality principle, the ego's attempt to control unconscious desires and the external universe (202-03). Kathryn Hume uses Freudian, Jungian and Gestalt theories of psychology to defend the genre of fantasy on the basis of its ability to provide meaning by manipulating "repressed anxieties" and invoking "latent fantasies" in the reader (175-76). George MacDonald's work has not been exempt from this tendency to equate literary fantasy with psychological fantasy. Robert Lee Wolff, on the basis of Freudian theory, presents the inane hypothesis that MacDonald's fiction is an expression of his repressed anxiety over a traumatic early weaning.[1] Richard Reis uses motifs such as the three-storied castle in *The Princess and the Goblin* to argue that MacDonald was "Freudian before Freud" (41):

> The Freudian hierarchy of ego (the Princess), the superego (the Fairy Grandmother in the attic), and id (the Goblins in the basement) is obvious enough; and their presence reflects MacDonald's independent discovery of these phenomena. (81)

Although Colin N. Manlove does not impose rigid correspondences with specific psychological theories on MacDonald's fantasies, he views them solely in terms of the

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[1] Wolff misconstrues MacDonald's texts and his biography to portray him as a tormented neurotic who is torn between longing for and bitterness toward his mother, drawing much of his evidence from the female characters in MacDonald's books. See *The Golden Key*, 12-15, 315-18, 372-74. David Holbrook takes Wolff's hypothesis to an even more ludicrous extreme in his argument that MacDonald's spiritual desires are longings for "the visionary breast" (31) and "Death, so that he can be with his mother again" (35).

human psyche:

> All of MacDonald's fairy-tales are set in landscapes which are symbols of mind, and are concerned with mental perception, and their Fairy Lands are invariably in the 'sub' -- or 'super' -- consciousness. (71)

Manlove is insightful and, for the most part, accurate, but he fails to account for MacDonald's theological concept of God.

Although MacDonald's fairy-tales conform to Gary K. Wolfe's definition of fantasy as "analogues of inner experience,"* they differ from other fantasies in that inner experience, for MacDonald, is not solely the interaction of various components within the self, but also of the self with a God who is a distinct and personal entity. In his essay on the imagination, MacDonald argues that all human psychological processes are ultimately the activity of God:

> As thoughts move in the mind of a man, so move the worlds of men and women in the mind of God. . . . Man is but a thought of God. . . . Indeed, a man is rather *being thought* than *thinking*; when a new thought arises in his mind. (*DO*, 4)

What modern psychologists label the unconscious, MacDonald calls the inner spirit, the locus of communion with God:

> God sits in that chamber of our being in which the candle of our consciousness goes out in the darkness, and sends forth from thence wonderful gifts into the light of that understanding which is His candle. (*DO*, 25)

Instead of being a vehicle for repressed anxieties and desires, in MacDonald's hands, fantasy becomes an expression of intimations of eternity and revelations of God, the "wonderful gifts" that man receives from his innermost

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* "The Encounter with Fantasy," 13.

being. As Rolland Hein points out, "MacDonald's imagination is biblically oriented, and Scripture, not Freud, is the safer guide to his meaning" (73n). Psychological critics of literature defend their analyses with the irrefragable argument that all men are motivated by the postulated desires and principles whether they believe in them or not. If called upon to refute such an argument, MacDonald would undoubtedly have made an equivalent counter-assertion: God exists and works within men whether they believe in Him or not. It is much more viable to interpret MacDonald's fantasies in terms of his own theological ideas than to esteem psychological theories, which often conflict with his ideas, as authoritative keys that unlock mysterious hidden meanings in his work.

MacDonald's attitude toward his fantasies and toward his life is succinctly expressed in an excerpt from Novalis' *Fragments* which he uses as an epitaph to *Lilith*: "Our life is no dream, but it should and will perhaps become one" (252).[10] MacDonald departs from the standard definitions of fantasy and reality. For most people, reality is the tangible, material world which is perceptible to the senses, and fantasy is any departure from what is possible in this world.[11] For MacDonald, the material world is only an

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[10] MacDonald read Novalis and other German philosophers in the original (*GMW*, 73, 159). Novalis was first introduced to English readers by Thomas Carlyle in 1829. Carlyle's translation of this passage, in contrast to MacDonald's, is diffident and tentative: "Our life is no dream, but it may and will perhaps become one." *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, II, 42.

[11] In his recent encyclopedia on fantasy, Gary K. Wolfe

ephemeral creation, and God, the Creator, is the eternal, unchanging, absolute standard of truth. The dream, the fantasy, the superstitious belief, becomes the ultimate reality. MacDonald's literary fantasies are essentially about the question of belief. In his analysis of fantastic literature and superstition, Tobin Siebers notes that unbelief is not based on fact, but merely an alternate form of speculation:

> Skepticism is a superstitious reaction to superstition that masks belief as unbelief, but remains superstitious about any claims for the validity of belief. (34)

MacDonald must have made a similar observation, for in his fantasies, he challenges the skeptic's assurance that only what is perceptible to the senses exists. With his primary and secondary worlds, he establishes a dialectic between belief and unbelief. Belief is presented as an inner experience and also as it appears from the point of view of unbelief. Similarily, unbelief is portrayed from within and without.

This study examines the inverted value system in MacDonald's fantasies in three successive stages. "The Synthetic Imagination" deals with the inception of faith, the moment of perception, the initial act of apprehending eternity. "Dying Into Life" discusses the effects of this revelation on the individual, the inner struggle between

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''(cont'd) lists no less than fourteen critics who concur with Kathryn Hume's definition of fantasy as "any departure from consensus reality." See *Critical Terms for Science Fiction and Fantasy*, 38-40; Hume, *Fantasy and Mimesis*, 21.

rival selves, one self-created, and another, newly emergent, being fashioned by God. "Forgotten Cornerstones" moves from the solitary to the social experience and looks at the prophetic role of the regenerated believer.'[3] All three chapters will celebrate the depth and the scope of George MacDonald's extraordinary insight into the human spirit by explaining *why* he so prefers the visionary "dream."

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[3] Although MacDonald's shorter fairytales are often superb in quality, they provide little opportunity for examining his ideas on human development by tracing the extended spiritual growth of individual characters. Because of its developmental nature, this study will be confined to the book-length fantasies.

II. The Synthetic Imagination

All that man sees has to do with man. . . .
No shining belt or gleaming moon, no red and
green glory in a self-encircling twin-star,
but has a relation with the hidden things
of a man's soul. . . . (*Phantastes*)

In *Lilith*, George MacDonald describes the transcendental realm of the spirit and the mundane material world as distinct, and yet interrelated:

> Ah, the two worlds! so strangely are they one,
> And yet so measurelessly wide apart! (147)

From the perspective of disbelief, there is an unbreachable gulf between the transcendent and the mundane. The transcendental realm is merely a vagary, a "dream" which has nothing to do with the "real" world. However, from the vantage of belief, the invisible spiritual realm is more tangible, more "real" than the mundane world which denies its existence. For the man who has faith, the two worlds are interconnected -- "so strangely one." In MacDonald's thought, the link between the transcendent and the mundane, the agent of faith, is the human faculty of imagination.

In "The Imagination: Its Functions and Its Culture," MacDonald ascribes two correlative functions to the imagination: "the divine function of putting thought into form" and another "duty altogether human . . . that of following and finding out the divine imagination in whose image it was made" (*DO*, 10). The first function of the imagination, "putting thought into form," establishes a synthesis between man and nature. MacDonald acknowledges that human beings, whose very consciousness is oriented in time and space, cannot conceive of spiritual matters solely as disembodied abstractions:

> No thought, human or divine, can be conveyed from man to man save through the symbolism of creation. The heavens and the earth are around us that it may

> be possible for us to speak of the unseen by the seen; for the outermost husk of creation has correspondence with the deepest things of the Creator. (*US III*, 31)

The external form of nature, which is perceptible to the senses,[13] becomes "the garment or body of man's invisible thought" (*DO*, 8):

> For the world is . . . the human being turned inside out. All that moves in the mind is symbolized in nature. . . . the world is a sensuous analysis of humanity, and, hence, an inexhaustible wardrobe for the clothing of human thought. (*DO*, 9)

As Greville MacDonald explains, MacDonald sees the external form of nature, the symbol, as possessing common inherent properties with the human impulse that it expresses:

> To him a symbol was far more than an arbitrary outward and visible sign of an abstract conception: its high virtue lay in a common *substance* with the idea presented. . . . But the rose, when it gives some glimmer of the freedom for which a man hungers, does so because of its *substantial* unity with the man, each in degree being a signature of God's immanence. (*GMW*, 481-82)

MacDonald insists that man's interaction with the world of nature should be based on these common properties derived from a mutual relationship with God, that nature "which proceeded from the imagination of God should rouse the best thoughts in the mind of a being who proceeded from the love of God" (*DO*, 254).

The second function of the imagination, "finding out the divine imagination in whose image it was made," establishes a synthesis between earthly beings and an eternal God. MacDonald argues that there is a numinous plane

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[13] MacDonald defines "the *forms* of nature" as "those conditions which affect the senses of man" (*DO*, 18).

of spiritual meaning in nature which only comes into existence when perceived by man: "the higher being of a flower even is dependent for its reception upon the human imagination" (*DO*, 10). The human consciousness, in its continual search for meaning, echoes the divine imagination, which is its source. Man's imagination illuminates the thoughts of God inherent in the material world:

> The meanings are in those forms already, else they could be no garment of unveiling. . . . The man has but to light the lamp within the form: his imagination is the light, it is not the form. Straightway the shining thought makes the form visible, and becomes itself visible through the form. (*DO*, 5)

In his sermon "The Truth," MacDonald illustrates his idea of communion with God through an awakened perception of nature in a description of a hypothetical woman's response to a flower:

> it is God's thought, unrecognized as such, holding communion with her. She weeps in inexplicable delight. It is only a daisy! only a primrose! . . . But here to her is no mere fact; here is no law of nature; here is a truth of nature, the truth of a flower -- a perfect thought from the heart of God -- a truth of God ! -- not an intellectual truth, but a divine fact, a dim revelation, a movement of the creative soul ! (*US III*, 66)

The imagination enables human beings to perceive the transcendental realm beyond and *within* the commonplace. The two functions of the imagination work to unite man both with his external environment and with the eternal God. Through the agency of the imagination, the phenomenal world of nature and the numinous realm of the spirit are synthesized within the human consciousness.

Of all MacDonald's fantasies, *Lilith* has the most elaborate treatment of the relationship between the mundane and the transcendent, of the "marriage" between the two that takes place within the mind of man. The central character, Mr. Vane, journeys to and from the supernatural secondary world five times in succession. In the first and third transitions, MacDonald illustrates the means of apprehending the eternal realm: an awakened perception. Initially, Vane is an intellectual skeptic who spends his time reading science books in his library. He has his first encounter with the supernatural when the setting sun tinges a portrait on the wall in front of him a different colour:

> The direct sunlight brought out the painting wonderfully; for the first time I seemed to see it, and for the first time it seemed to respond to my look. With my eyes full of the light reflected from it, something, I cannot tell what, made me turn and cast a glance to the farther end of the room, when I saw, or seemed to see, a tall figure reaching a hand to a bookshelf. (6)

Vane concludes that this "vague, evanescent impression" is the result of his "optic nerves [having] been momentarily affected from within" (7), a rational explanation which only suffices until the old man reappears and leads him up several flights of stairs to an unexplored garret. Gazing into a mirror in the garret, Vane is surprised to see a wilderness landscape instead of his own reflection. He steps forward to examine a large raven moving about within the mirror and finds himself "in the open air, on a houseless heath" (11). When Vane expresses his consternation, the raven informs him that the mirror is "the door" into this

strange world. Like the setting sun, the mirror lifts Vane out of his solipsistic, abstract meditations and causes him to see the external world in a new way. In Vane's third transition to the secondary world, his perception is literally altered when he physically manipulates the mirrors:

> I shifted and shifted the mirrors, changing their relation, until at last . . . things came right between them, and I saw the mountains steady and clear. I stepped forward, and my feet were among the heather. (43)

MacDonald interprets the symbolism of the mirror in a passage from *Phantastes*:

> What a strange thing a mirror is! and what a wondrous affinity exists between it and a man's imagination! For this room of mine, as I behold it in the glass, is the same, and yet not the same. . . . All its commonness has disappeared. The mirror has lifted it out of the region of fact into the realm of art. (89)

The mirrors in the garret represent the awakened imagination, which alters man's perception of his surroundings and, consequently, is his portal into the transcendent realm of eternity.

Vane's second and fourth transitions to the secondary world elucidate the interrelationship of the mundane and transcendent worlds. While reading his science books, he begins to notice correspondences between the phenomenal world of nature and the numinous realm of the spirit:

> I was constantly seeing, and on the outlook to see, strange analogies, not only between facts of different sciences of the same order, or between physical and metaphysical facts, but between physical hypotheses and suggestions glimmering out of the metaphysical dreams into which I was in the

habit of falling. (5)

Vane dismisses his spiritual intimations, which are messages from the eternal realm, as "mental peculiarities" (5), and proceeds to examine the correspondences as academic concepts: "the history of the human mind in relation to supposed knowledge was what most of all interested me" (6). Vane discovers the living reality behind the "strange analogies" he has detected in his books when, in the midst of a conversation in his garden, he, quite unwillingly, finds himself in an unfamiliar pine-forest. His companion, the mysterious Mr. Raven, reassures him that he has not really left his estate:

> 'That tree stands on the hearth of your kitchen, and grows nearly straight up its chimney. . . . Those great long heads of wild hyacinth are inside the piano, among the strings of it, and give that peaceful sweetness to her [the housekeeper's niece] playing!' (22-23)

With this phenomenon that Greville MacDonald calls "the faculty of *bi-local existing*" (*GMW*, 298), not only do two objects occupy the same geographical space, but they intermingle and interfuse. The music from the piano and the scent of the hyacinths merge to create a new synesthetic identity, composed of properties from both. In these coexistent worlds, MacDonald has created a symbol of the symbol itself. When man likens a material object to a spiritual trait, each element brings out new aspects of meaning in the other and, in a sense, each receives a new identity which incorporates the correspondences between the two. The two elements coexist within the symbol as it is

apprehended by the human mind.

Vane, who has hitherto been confined to the mundane world, is unaware of this interrelationship and challenges Mr. Raven's observations:

> 'Two objects . . . cannot exist in the same place at the same time! . . . You are a librarian, and talk such rubbish! . . . Plainly, you did not read many of the books in your charge!' (23)

Mr. Raven defends himself with an enigmatic personal testimony:

> 'Oh, yes! I went through all in your library -- at the time and came out at the other side not much the wiser. I was a bookworm then, but when I came to know it, I awoke among the butterflies.' (23)

A little later, Mr. Raven speaks more directly, penetrating Vane's veneer of intellectual superiority and drawing attention to his spiritual deficiencies:

> 'You are a true sexton, books are but dead bodies to you, and a library nothing but a catacomb!' (30)

Vane experiences his own metamorphosis from bookworm to butterfly, from arid pedantry to vital experience, during his fourth transition to the secondary world. In the library, Mr. Raven pulls a volume out from one of the shelves, which Vane recognizes as one which used to be diagonally bisected: "I stared at the book in his hand: it was a whole book, entire and sound!" (143). Mr. Raven explains that the missing half of the volume previously occupied his library in the other world. When Vane was an intellectual skeptic, the spiritual portion of the book appeared to be nonexistent (7). Only after Vane has travelled extensively in the secondary world and become

familiar with it, can he perceive the book as a whole and have access to its message. The text of the book is written in a mystical language which bypasses the intellect and conveys ineffable truths directly to the spirit:

> The poem seemed in a language I had never before heard, which yet I understood perfectly, although I could not write the words, or give their meaning save in poor approximation. (144)

Although Vane is physically in the primary world, while listening to the esoteric book, he is consciously in the realm of eternity.[13] Like the mysterious book, he inhabits both worlds at once.

The text within the book emphasizes the role of the human consciousness in the interrelationship between the transcendent and the mundane:

> But if I found a man that could believe
> In what he saw not, felt not, and yet knew,
> From him I should take substance, and receive
> Firmness and form relate to touch and view;
> Then should I clothe me in the likeness true
> Of that idea where his soul did cleave! (144)

The "I" in these lines is the poem itself: art is revealing the genesis and function of art. A human being with imaginative faith and spiritual insight apprehends an "idea" from the invisible transcendent realm and clothes it in a corresponding "form." When the symbol, the combination of the spiritual idea and the material form, is expressed in art, it becomes a permanent record, perceptible to the

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[13] After their colloquy in the library, Vane and Mr. Raven rush upstairs, hurriedly adjust the mirrors and enter the secondary world. For Vane, this physical transition is uneventful, like going "through an open window" (153). His real transition is the spiritual awakening that he experiences while listening to the book.

senses of those in the mundane. MacDonald considers art to be "the highest human result of the embodying imagination" (*DO*, 25). In *Phantastes*, MacDonald claims that art enlivens its reader by injecting the perspective of eternity into the mundane:

> . . . art rescues nature from the weary and sated regards of our senses, and the degrading injustice of our anxious every-day life, and appealing to the imagination, which dwells apart, reveals Nature in some degree as she really is. (90)

Mr. Raven's book is true art, which has both a material and a spiritual component and bridges the gap between the transcendent and the mundane. From it, Vane discovers that books can be more than "dead bodies," something other than collections of academic facts, remote from the experiences of life.

MacDonald portrays the supreme role of the synthetic imagination in Vane's final sojourn in the secondary world. The growth that Vane has experienced through his sequential transitions, the incremental awakening of his imagination, culminates in an intense mystical apprehension of the eternal God who unites and gives meaning to Creation:

> Every growing thing showed me, by its shape and colour, its indwelling idea -- the informing thought, that is, which was its being. . . . The microcosm and macrocosm were at length atoned, at length in harmony! I lived in everything; everything entered and lived in me. To be aware of a thing, was to know its life at once and mine, to know whence we came, and where we were at home -- was to know that we are all what we are, because Another is what he is! (243)

While in the secondary world, he consents to "sleep" in Mr. Raven's charnel. During this death-sleep, a sequence of

dreams ends in an abrupt return to the library in the primary world. That night, when Vane goes to bed, he awakes and finds himself back in the house of death: "every moment since there I fell asleep I had been dreaming, and was now first awake" (237). *Lilith* ends when Vane permanently returns to his library, the starting point of all his adventures. Vane's first transition was merely an evanescent glimpse of the transcendent realm, which he subsequently dismissed as a vagary. In this final transition, he has come full circle and now questions the "reality" of the mundane world:

> Can it be that that last waking also was in the dream? that I am still in the chamber of death, asleep and dreaming, not yet ripe enough to wake? (251)

Because Vane's imagination has been fully awakened, the supramundane world, which he considered a "dream" in his former disbelief, becomes the ultimate verity.

In *The Princess and the Goblin* and *The Princess and Curdie*, MacDonald explores the synthetic imagination, not in terms of abstract symbolic correspondences, as he does in *Lilith*, but rather as a subjective experience set in the context of an entire human soul. "The Imagination: Its Functions and Its Culture" is structured around a debate with a "straw man" who trusts only in fact and considers the imagination frivolous:

> Are there not facts? . . . Why forsake them for fancies? Is there not that which may be *known*? Why forsake it for inventions? (*DO*, 2)

MacDonald identifies his opposition as "the Intellect" and

stresses the inadequacy of restricting investigation of the created world to rational analysis:

> . . . science may pull the snowdrop to shreds, but cannot find out the idea of suffering hope and pale confident submission, for the sake of which that darling of the spring looks out of heaven. . . . in finding out the works of God, the Intellect must labour, workman-like, under the direction of the architect, Imagination. (*DO*, 10-11)

The Curdie books are structured in much the same way. Imaginative faith is set over against the antithetic experience of skepticism and disbelief. The goblin race and Irene, the princess, portray the polarized extremes of the intellect and the imagination. Characters with awakened imaginations have access to the transcendent secondary worlds, while "intellectual" characters, who resemble the pragmatic straw man, are confined to the mundane.

At the beginning of *The Princess and the Goblin*, Irene is on the threshold of faith, dissatisfied with her circumscribed, mundane existence. Irene's residence, "half castle, half farmhouse," located "half-way between [a mountain's] base and its peak" (11), is symbolic of her intermediate state. Images of stars in Irene's eyes reveal her longing for transcendence:

> Those eyes you would have thought must have known they came from there [the heavens], so often were they turned up in that direction. (12)

Because of the threat of the goblins at night, Irene is prevented from seeing the real stars and is confined to her nursery which is decorated with artificial stars. Sheltered from the outside world by overprotective servants, expected

to amuse herself with a plethora of childish toys, Irene is "very miserable" (16).

New vistas open up for Irene by means of her imagination. In a marvellous, dream-like scene, she wakes up in the middle of the night and notices a secret staircase in her nursery "which looked as if never anyone had set foot on it" (16). At the top of Irene's personal staircase is a corridor of mysterious closed doors. Afraid of what could be behind the doors, Irene attempts to return to the security of her nursery and reverts to reasoning with her intellect: "she resolved on going wisely to work her way back" (17). After systematically searching the corridor, she discovers that the descending staircase is now behind one of the closed doors. Her only egress is an ascending staircase, partially visible "through a half-open door," inviting her to go deeper into the unknown: "Frightened as she was, she could not help wishing to see where yet further the stair could lead" (17). When Irene's curiosity, the projection of her imagination into the unknown, overcomes the "sensible" fear instilled in her by the overprotective castle servants, she enters the domain of her supernatural "great-great grandmother" (21).

After her initial visit to Queen Irene's workroom, Irene once more struggles with disbelief. She successfully resists the skepticism of the castle servants; but when even her "king-papa" denies any knowledge of the lady in the tower, Irene concedes that "it must be a dream" (76). During

her second visit, Irene's grandmother chides her for reverting to this commonsensical view and leads her by the hand onto a dark, narrow landing. Irene's act of trust is rewarded by a deeper spiritual revelation: she is ushered into the intimacy of her grandmother's bedroom. Lesley Willis notes that this transition from workroom to bedroom signifies that "Irene, after her initiation of struggle, suffering and doubt, is ready to penetrate deeply into the realm of the spiritual" (29). When Irene inquires about the first object she sees in the bedroom, a "lamp round as a ball, shining as if with brightest moonlight" (84), her grandmother discloses the pivotal principle of the transcendent realm:

> 'I will tell you a secret -- if that light were to go out you would fancy yourself lying in a bare garret, on a heap of old straw, and would not see one of the pleasant things round about you all the time.' (85)

Without the illuminating lamp of the imagination, man is unable to perceive anything but the commonplace.

Irene's third journey into the secondary world commences when she is rescued by the lamp from the dark, perilous mountain: "a great silvery globe was hanging in the air; and as she gazed at the lovely thing, her courage revived" (98). The lamp guides Irene directly to her grandmother's bedroom and is instrumental in the fulfillment of her desire for transcendence:

> She had been gazing at the lovely lamp for some minutes fixedly: turning her eyes, she found the wall had vanished, for she was looking out on the dark cloudy night. But though she heard the wind

> blowing, none of it blew upon her. In a moment more the clouds themselves parted, or rather vanished like the wall, and she looked straight into the starry herds, flashing gloriously in the dark blue. (105)

When Irene's glimpses of the lamp are prolonged into an enduring vision, her imagination is fully awakened and the last integuments of the mundane, the walls and the clouds that obscure the heavens, fade away. For the first time in her life, Irene is able to observe authentic, instead of painted, stars.

In contrast to Irene whose imagination leads her upwards, both spiritually and geographically, are the goblins who are overly developed in "knowledge and cleverness" and live underground (14). The goblins epitomize the impoverished, egoistic intellectualism that MacDonald vehemently denounces in "The Fantastic Imagination":

> We spoil countless precious things by intellectual greed. He who will be a man, and will not be a child, must -- he cannot help himself -- become a little man, that is, a dwarf. He will, however, need no consolation, for he is sure to think himself a very large creature indeed. (*DO*, 322)

Because the goblins are at enmity with "the true, childlike, humble imagination" (*DO*, 12), the most powerful weapon against them is poetry, a product of the creative faculty: "the chief defense against them was verse, for they hated verse of every kind" (50). What little imagination the goblins do possess has been perverted, channelled into malevolence:

> But as they grew in cunning, they grew in mischief, and their great delight was in every way they could think of to annoy the people who lived in the

open-air storey above them. (14)

The dangerous imaginations of the goblins generate delusions of grandeur. A goblin's glory is his hard head, and his weakness his soft feet (53). Accepting their feet, the lowest and most vulnerable parts of their bodies, would be a confession of humility. Instead, the goblins esteem their intellects and deceive themselves into assertions of superiority: "'we excel them [humans] so far in mental ability as they excel us in stature'" (66). They often ratiocinate in pompous, elevated diction: "'The failure of the former will render the latter imperative'" (68). The arrogance of the goblins blinds them to the logical absurdity of some of their assertions: "'Will you malign your native realms and reduce them to a level with the country upstairs?'" (60). The goblins' misguided perception of geographical height and depth parallels their erroneous spiritual values. By falsely elevating themselves, they have, in fact, debased themselves and chosen a barren existence "in cold and wet and dark places" (13).

The dichotomy between the intellect and the imagination is internalized in Curdie, the young miner. Curdie is a pragmatist with a spiritual propensity, a skeptic on his way to belief. When he accompanies Irene to her grandmother's quarters, he sees nothing more than a prosaic garret-room filled with worthless refuse: "a tub, and a heap of musty straw, and a withered apple" (*PG*, 155). When Irene's grandmother heals a wound that Curdie incurred when the

king's archers mistook him for a goblin creature, he dismisses her apparition as a dream (*PG*, 182). Curdie is convinced that his commonsense is superior to Irene's faith, but he is not entrenched in fatuous arrogance like the goblins:

> he was getting rather stupid -- one of the chief signs of which was that he believed less and less in things he had never seen. At the same time I do not think he was ever so stupid as to imagine that this was a sign of superiority and strength of mind. (*PC*, 17)

Curdie is a median between the goblins and Irene. Although he shares the goblin traits of cleverness and practicality, he is also their worst enemy, because he has a creative gift for extemporizing rhymes (*PG*, 36). Curdie's imagination is active, but not developed enough to be a portal into the transcendent realm.

The disparity between Curdie's incipient imagination and Irene's fully awakened imagination is brought out by the motif of the thread in *The Princess and the Goblin*. Immediately after Irene's momentous first glimpse of the stars, her grandmother hands her "a shimmering ball" and then exchanges it for an opal ring, which Irene is to wear at all times. The ring is connected to the ball, which remains in Queen Irene's possession, by a delicate thread spun from spider webs. Too fine to be seen, the thread can only be felt by the finger that wears the ring. Irene's thread is invisible and spiritual, but the thread that Curdie relies on is material and practical. In a chapter entitled "Curdie's Clue," Curdie uses a ball of string, tied

to his pickaxe, to guide him through the labyrinthian tunnels of the goblins. When the goblins' creatures move his axe, Curdie loses his way and ends up the goblins' prisoner. In a parallel chapter entitled "Irene's Clue," Irene's thread leads her into the tunnels to rescue Curdie from his thwarted efforts. The difference between Curdie's thread and Irene's thread emphasizes the difference in their imaginations. Curdie's "clue" is attached to an inanimate object, a tool for mundane labour; Irene's "clue" attaches her to her supernatural grandmother who loves and cares for her. Curdie's thread is the result of his own efforts, but Irene's grandmother has instructed her to abandon her intellect when she follows her thread:

> 'But, remember, it may seem to you a very round about way indeed, and you must not doubt the thread. Of one thing you may be sure, that while you hold it, I hold it too.' (108)

Curdie's imagination takes the form of resourcefulness and ingenuity, whereas Irene's imagination is a pseudopodial extension of her being, an antenna probing new vistas and guiding her into the unknown.

The contrasting imaginations of Curdie and Irene represent the divergent functions that MacDonald ascribes to the synthetic imagination. Curdie's imagination links him with his external environment. He weaves mundane details into his poetry: "Four, five, six --/ Shovels, mattocks, picks!" (*PG*, 38). Curdie labours with his father in mysterious mountains to uncover beauty inherent in nature:

> their business was to bring to light hidden things;

> they sought silver in the rock and found it, and carried it out. Of the many other precious things in their mountain they knew little or nothing. (*PC*, 12)

The mountains are "beautiful terrors," the living "heart of the earth" (*PC*, 9). Curdie misses out on many of their arcane riches, because his imagination is limited to the material world. Irene's imagination, on the other hand, fulfils the duty "of following and finding out the divine imagination in whose image it was made" (*DO*, 10). Her gossamer thread is an exquisite symbol for imaginative faith, which links earthly beings with an eternal God.

For MacDonald, the human imagination is much more than a specialized aspect of cognition. In *Biographia Literaria*, Samuel Taylor Coleridge defines the secondary imagination as a mental faculty which "dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate" (Perkins, 452). MacDonald also sees this integration of mundane details as a lesser function of the imagination. His conception of the imagination as an instrument of faith, as a link with eternity, closely resembles Coleridge's primary imagination: "the living Power and prime agent of all human Perception" (Perkins, 452). From "the true, childlike, humble imagination," George MacDonald expects no less than "an insight into the very nature of things" (*DO*, 13).

III. Dying Into Life

We on the dark side call the mystery *death*;
They, on the other, looking down in light,
Wait the glad *birth*, with other tears than ours.

A Hidden Life, Poetical Works, I

For George MacDonald, the inevitable corollary of imaginative insight is spiritual growth. In *The Princess and Curdie*, he asserts that human beings can evolve in two directions:'[4]

> in the one case it is a continuous dying, in the other a continuous resurrection. One of the latter sort comes at length to know whether a thing is true the moment it comes before him; one of the former class grows more and more afraid of being taken in, so afraid of it that he takes himself in altogether, and comes at length to believe in nothing but his dinner: to be sure of a thing with him is to have it between his teeth. (17-18)

A circumscribed mundane life, in which a man "believes in nothing but his dinner," his bodily existence and daily survival, is tantamount to death in MacDonald's thought because it precludes the possibility of spiritual rebirth: "Man's occupation with himself turns his eyes from the great life beyond his threshold" (*DO*, 54). The mundane or "destructible" elements must be extricated from the immortal soul before it can "*partake* of eternal life" (*US I*, 45). The individual who allows himself to be purged, who relinquishes his inferior self, experiences "resurrection," the emergence of a primordial, divinely-created self:

'[4] Richard Reis notes that MacDonald adapted the contemporary scientific theory of evolution to the concept of spiritual growth:

> MacDonald's idea that spiritual education progresses by discrete stages is obviously parallel to Darwin's discovery that, for the achievement of higher forms of life, a graduated species-by-species evolution through inferior stages is necessary. (132)

He adds that MacDonald's unique contribution to the theory of evolution is "the reversibility of the upward climb of the species," which allows for the possibility of a degenerative process Reis calls "devolution." *George MacDonald*, 132-33.

> The wrath will consume what they *call* themselves; so that the selves God made shall appear. . . . They will know that now first are they fully themselves. (*US I*, 44)

MacDonald inverts the standard conceptions of life and death in much the same way that he reverses dream and reality. What is generally considered life and growth, the preservation and cultivation of the self, for MacDonald, is "a continuous dying." The eradication of the familiar self, which most people would deem suicidal madness, MacDonald calls "a continuous resurrection."

In *Lilith*, MacDonald exposes the fundamental cause of "continuous dying": a deceptive belief in the intrinsic worth of the inferior self. MacDonald insists that man is born incomplete and remains in error until he recognizes his dependency on God:

> When the soul . . . sooner or later becomes aware that he needs some one above him, whom to obey, in whom to rest, from whom to seek deliverance from what in himself is despicable . . . then indeed is the man in the region of truth, and beginning to come true in himself. (*US III*, 77)

As an intellectual, Vane, the narrator of *Lilith*, takes pride in his ingenuity and discernment. Mr. Raven, his mentor, attempts to demonstrate the limitations of these mental abilities by calling attention to profound spiritual mysteries that surpass ratiocination: "'The world is a riddle trying to get out, and you are holding your door hard against it'" (45). Mr. Raven persistently confronts Vane with one such conundrum, an enigmatic reversal of life and death: "'You will be dead, so long as you refuse to die'"

(157). Vane rejects an opportunity to discover this mystery, to die to his familiar self by sleeping in Mr. Raven's House of Death, with an obdurate self-assertion: "'I will *not*'" (36). Rolland Hein notes that Vane exerts his will and refuses to sleep because "he is under the delusion that becoming is a process of the soul making itself" (89). Although Vane has good intentions, his actions recurrently result in failure, because he is overconfident. He becomes enamoured with the Little Ones, a group of orphans who are suspended in a perennial childhood, and promises to help them by discovering a means to make them grow. He overestimates his abilities by assuming that he *can* fulfil his philanthropic mission. Vane's misguided altruism brings nothing but disaster for the Little Ones. Seduced by delusions of chivalric heroism, he saves the life of Lilith, "their one fearful enemy" (132). Vane uses his commitment to the orphans as an excuse to reject Adam's'[18] second invitation to submit to sleep in the House of Death (156). Only after he leads the children in a calamitous campaign against the corrupt city of Bulika and causes the death of their leader, Lona, does Vane acknowledge his inadequacies and stop relying upon his own abilities:

> What an end to the hopes with which I entered the evil place! We had captured the bad princess, and lost our all-beloved queen! My life was bare! my heart was empty! (186)

When Vane faces the truth about himself, he understands the

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[18] In a previous discussion, Vane realized the true identity of his mentor: "at last I understood that Mr. Raven was indeed Adam the old and the new man" (148).

purport of Adam's riddle and abandons the self-preservation that leads to death. Instead, he works for the cause of death that leads to resurrection and assists in bringing the evil princess, Lilith, to repentance.

The more extreme consequences of spurious self-sufficiency are exemplified in the character of Lilith. According to Jewish legend, before Eve, Adam had an evil wife named Lilith, who refused to bear children or submit to her husband.'[1] MacDonald's Lilith bears Adam a daughter, but becomes "puffed with the fancy that she had created her" (147). Believing herself to be a divine Creator for giving birth, she exalts herself above Adam and demands that he worship her (147). Lilith's conviction that she owns her child and can do with her as she wills leads her to regard others as instruments for her own gratification. She becomes a parasitic destroyer, empty and bereft of life inside, an insidious vampire who feeds off the blood of the living. Like Vane, Lilith only experiences true life when she is

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[1] Roderick F. McGillis posits that the Lilith legend was incorporated into Jewish mythology during the Babylonian captivity. In Babylonian mythology, Lilith was a female demon or succubus sent to earth to seduce mortal men. In later legends, her role was to terrorize mothers and destroy children. McGillis argues that Jewish scholars adopted the Lilith legend to explain the two Biblical accounts of the creation of man. The first chapter of Genesis implies that God created the first man and woman simultaneously: "male and female created he them" (1: 27). In the second chapter is a contradictory narrative which describes God creating Eve after Adam out of his rib (2: 18 - 23). The Jews reasoned that the first woman, who was created in an equal manner, would not submit to her husband, and, hence, must have become a demonic villainess like the evil succubus of Babylonian legend. See "George MacDonald and the Lilith Legend in the XIXth Century," 3.

purged by the light of truth and forced to accept a more accurate assessment of herself. Mara, Mother of Sorrow, adjures Lilith to acknowledge that she is indebted to the omnipotent God who created her. When Lilith defiantly refuses, Mara burns her with an incandescent worm, "the live heart of essential fire" (201). As Lilith writhes in agony when the worm pierces through her body to the thoughts and intents of her heart, Mara explains to Vane that she is being confronted with the truth about herself:

> 'She is far away from us, afar in the hell of her self-consciousness. The central fire of the universe is radiating into her the knowledge of good and evil, the knowledge of what she is. She sees at last the good she is not, the evil she is.' (201)

After a lengthy period of chastisement, Lilith finally realizes the worthlessness of the self she has exalted and truculently clung to:

> She was what God could not have created. She had usurped her share in self-creation, and her part had undone His! She saw now what she had made, and behold, it was not good! She was a conscious corpse, whose coffin would never come to pieces, never set her free! (206)

Lilith's possessiveness is symbolized by a closed fist on her left hand, "clenched -- upon existent Nothing -- her inheritance!" (206). She is so entrenched in her selfish pride that she is unable to voluntarily open her hand and relinquish her hold on her inferior self. Lilith finds no relief from her torment until her hand is amputated, and she begins to "die out of death into life" by surrendering to sleep in Adam's charnel (207).

The House of Death, in MacDonald's theology, is a place of supernal purgation, a type of hell which prepares human souls for a sempiternal afterlife. Although MacDonald is reluctant to overtly repudiate the Calvinist doctrine of eternal damnation, in a sermon entitled "Justice," he suggests that God is concerned with the quality, not the duration of punishment:

> What better is the world, what better is the sinner, what better is God, what better is truth, that the sinner should suffer -- continue suffering to all eternity ? (*US III*, 123)

MacDonald claims that men can only be redeemed from evil when it is replaced with good: "Annihilation is no death to evil. Only good where evil was, is evil dead" (*Lilith*, 153). The sufferings of hell must generate "a vision, a true sight . . . of the hideousness of their lives, of the horror of the wrongs they have done" (*US III*, 126). MacDonald argues that a loving God could neither "keep sin alive in [human souls] throughout the ages of eternity" nor "regard any suffering with satisfaction" (*US III*, 130-31). Motivated by love and mercy, God purges human beings until they are free from selfishness and worthy of immortality.

When Mr. Raven/Adam initially shows Vane his charnel, he states that individuals come to him in various states of readiness:

> 'None of those you see . . . are in truth quite dead yet, and some have but begun to come alive and die. Others had begun to die, that is to come alive, long before they came to us; and when such are indeed dead, that instant they will wake and leave us.' (35)

Because of the extremity of her evil, Lilith experiences no spiritual resurrection whatsoever until after her physical death. She must undergo a prolonged purgation and "will be the last to wake in the morning of the universe" (218). Vane began to die to selfishness and come alive spiritually prior to his physical death. As a result, he is freed from the bonds of his self-created, inferior self immediately after falling asleep in Adam's House of Death:

> I grew continuously less conscious of myself, continuously more conscious of bliss, unimaginable yet felt. . . . Fully in every wrong lived the conscious I, confessing, abjuring, lamenting the dead, making atonement with each person I had injured, hurt, or offended. . . . Love possessed me! Love was my life! Love was to me, as to him that made me, all in all! (230-31)

In MacDonald's theology, every human being will eventually die out of spiritual death into spiritual life; the only factor that is a matter of choice is *when*.

Whereas in *Lilith*, MacDonald focuses on the process of "continuous dying" and postpones spiritual rebirth until after physical death, in *The Princess and Curdie*, he portrays the process of "continuous resurrection," dying into life while still on earth. At the beginning of the story, Curdie is on the verge of adulthood and in grave danger of losing what little depth and imagination he has. He has previously experienced two supernatural manifestations: the miraculous healing of his wound by the grandmother's rose ointment (*PG*, 182) and the fortuitous appearance of Irene's invisible thread when he feared for the princess's safety (*PG*, 187). In his degenerated state,

Curdie denies the existence of the supernatural and dismisses Irene's mystical experiences as immature delusions:

> As Curdie grew older, he doubted more and more whether Irene had not been talking of some dream she had taken for reality: he had heard it said that children could not always distinguish betwixt dreams and actual events. (16)

MacDonald makes it clear that Curdie's emergence from childhood is not a positive thing. Curdie's parents have striven to inculcate a love for beauty and goodness in him: "they always loved what was fair and true and right better . . . than everything else put together" (37). Although they cannot identify any specific faults in Curdie, they are plagued with a penumbral anxiety about his spiritual welfare:

> There must be something wrong when a mother catches herself sighing over the time when her boy was in petticoats, or a father looks sad when he thinks about how he used to carry him on his shoulder. The boy should enclose and keep, as his life, the old child at the heart of him, and never let it go. He must still, to be a right man, be his mother's darling, and more, his father's pride, and more. The child is not meant to die, but to be forever freshborn. (18)

Curdie is at a crossroads. He retains a residue of the wonder, compassion and integrity that he learned as a child and, therefore, has the potential to grow into true maturity, which incorporates these salutary values. In the meantime, Curdie is declining, "gradually changing into a commonplace man" (17).

Curdie's moral peripeteia occurs when he encounters one of Queen Irene's white pigeons, a creature so gentle and

sensitive that twigs caught in its feathers "[cause] a certain roughness unpleasant" to its fastidious nature (18). For an instant, Curdie's imagination reaches out in empathy with the delicate, sentient dove:

> he became so one with the bird that he seemed to feel both its bill and feathers . . . and his heart swelled with the pleasure of its involuntary sympathy. (18)

However, the tender, childlike side of Curdie is immediately superseded by the pragmatic, commonplace man that he is developing into. He no longer sees the dove as a fellow living creature, but rather as an object of conquest, a convenient target for testing his ability to shoot:

> that moment [the dove] fell on the path broken-winged and bleeding from Curdie's cruel arrow. With a gush of pride at his skill, and pleasure at his success, he ran to pick up his prey. (18)

As Curdie watches the defenseless bird lapse out of life, he realizes what he has become. The pigeon's wound seems glaringly unnatural: "stained with another red than that of the sunset flood in which he had been revelling" (19). The stain of blood on the pigeon's white breast evinces an acute awareness of the blight inside Curdie's soul:

> He had stopped saving, and begun killing! What had been sent into the world for? Surely not to be a death to its joy and loveliness. He had done the thing that was contrary to gladness; he was a destroyer! He was not the Curdie he had been meant to be! (20)

In his anguish, Curdie's rival selves struggle for supremacy. The child he was fondly remembers that his friendship with Princess Irene had been based on values he

has abandoned, unselfishness, love and trust: "They had been saviours to each other" (20). The insensitive adult he is becoming retaliates in anger when his guilt alieniates him from the rest of creation:

> The red sunset stung him; the rocks frowned at him; the sweet wind that had been laving his face as he walked up the hill dropped -- as if he wasn't fit to be kissed anymore. . . . Was the whole world going to make a work about a pigeon -- a white pigeon? (21)

Curdie's inner battle ends at a crucial moment when his pernicious adult self is about to exculpate him and nullify his repentance:

> An evil something began to move in his heart. 'What a fool I am!' he said to himself. Then he grew angry, and was going to throw the bird from him and whistle, when a brightness shone all round him. He lifted his eyes, and saw a great globe of light. (21)

The sudden appearance of Queen Irene's moon enkindles Curdie's faith in the supernatural. When he is elevated above the commonplace by the illuminating lamp of the imagination, Curdie's spiritual degeneration is reversed, and he begins to grow in the direction of true maturity.

The impact of Curdie's imaginative vision is exhibited by his subsequent action. Immediately after his moral peripeteia, Curdie rushes the dying pigeon to the castle towers. The act of going to the towers is, in itself, evidence of his nascent faith. Previously, when he accompanied Irene to her grandmother's apartments, Curdie saw nothing but a bare garret-room filled with musty straw (*PG*, 155). Now that Curdie's imagination has been awakened

and functions as a tentacular extension of his being, he believes in the existence of a realm at the top of the stairs which he has not yet seen.'' Curdie's newly enlivened imagination reaches out in empathy as well as faith. He now commiserates with the plight of the pigeon and takes it to its owner in an attempt to undo the damage he has done. Curdie's belief in the transcendent and his concern for others attest that he has changed, that a new Curdie has begun to emerge.

The emergence of Curdie's divinely-created self is presaged by Queen Irene's spinning wheel. In MacDonald's thought, God created each individual with a true name, a unique essential identity, which "expresses the character, the nature, the being, the *meaning* of the person who bears it" (*US I*, 106). Although this mystical name lies dormant within a person, he cannot receive it until his actual state of being coincides with the identity that God planned for him:

> Such a name cannot be given until the man *is* the name. God's name for a man must then be the expression . . . of his own idea of the man, that being whom he had in his thought when he began to make the child. (*US I*, 108)

The spinning wheel, with its perpetual cyclical motion, is a mandala-like symbol of wholeness and perfection, an emblem of the divine blueprint for life. Upon his initial entry into the transcendent realm, the wheel unearths a higher,

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''Curdie's confident ascension of the stairs exemplifies the Biblical definition of faith: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11: 1).

childlike self in Curdie, the source of his incipient imagination and moral rectitude:

> It was the spinning wheel that first taught him to make verses, and to sing, and to think whether all was right inside him; or at least it had helped him in all these things. (25)

When Curdie ascends the tower stairs a second time, he beholds a dynamic interchange of identities between the spinning wheel and its supernatural owner:

> the wheel was flashing blue -- oh, such lovely sky-blue light! -- and behind it of course sat the princess, but whether an old woman as thin as a skeleton leaf, or a glorious lady as young as perfection, he could not tell for the turning and flashing of the wheel. (64)

The lady's voice and the hum of the wheel merge into a sublime, ineffable song about God's creation labouring in anticipation of the divestiture of false identities:

> The stars are spinning their threads,
> And the clouds are the dust that flies,
> And the suns are weaving them up
> For the time when the sleepers shall rise. (65)

After an individual sheds the false husk of his inferior self, his true identity is revealed and he awakens from spiritual sleep.

Curdie receives his eternal identity through the course of three successive interviews with Irene's grandmother. In the first interview, Queen Irene cultivates Curdie's newly awakened imagination. When he diffidently apologizes for wounding the dove, she informs him that evil is the result of spiritual blindness:

> 'whoever does not mean good is always in danger of harm. . . . when you shot that arrow you did not know what a pigeon is. Now that you do know, you are

sorry.' (29)

An epiphany of the essence of a living thing is an apprehension of thought in God's mind when he created it:

> When the truth, the heart, the summit, the crown of a thing, is perceived by a man, he approaches the fountain of truth whence the thing came, and perceiving God by understanding what is, becomes more of a man, more of the being he was meant to be. (*US III*, 70)

Curdie's insight into the nature and worth of the pigeon attunes him to the transcendent realm which underlies the mundane and enables him to grasp the thought God had when He created *him*, to see the quintessential Curdie he was originally meant to be. When Curdie is asked to confess the other evil deeds he has performed that day, he momentarily attempts to convince himself that he is "a very good fellow on the whole" (30). However, after listening to Queen Irene's spinning wheel, he realizes that, in his ignorance, he has been integrally corrupt:

> 'Thank you, ma'am, for spinning it into me with your wheel. I see now that I have been doing wrong the whole day, and such a many days besides! . . . When I killed your bird I did not know I was doing wrong, just because I was always wrong, and the wrong had soaked all through me.' (30)

The mystical song of the spinning wheel reminds Curdie of his nascent primordial self and gives him a new standard to measure his inferior, insensitive self against.

Queen Irene continues to widen the gap between Curdie's newly emergent primordial self and his waning inferior self in the second interview. Curdie and his father follow a refulgent emerald light into an unfamiliar cavern in the

mine. Queen Irene appears in the cavern as a beautiful lady of twenty-five years, resplendently clad in green velvet and a panoply of gems (49). This surprises Curdie because in the castle tower, she was a small, withered old woman (27). She then departs without explanation, leaving the father and son alone in the dark. The bifurcated functions of Curdie's newly awakened imagination work together as he establishes an empathic link with his father and struggles to retain his faith in the mysterious, supernatural lady:

> they did not lose courage, for there is a kind of capillary attraction in the facing of two souls, that lifts faith quite beyond the level to which either could raise it alone: they knew that they had seen the lady of emeralds, and it was to give them their own desire that she had gone from them, and neither would yield for a moment to the half doubts and half dreads that awoke in his heart. (51)

When she returns, Curdie expresses his confusion over her various identities:

> 'now I see you dark, and clothed in green, and the mother of all the light that dwells in the stones of the earth! And up there they call you Old Mother Wotherwop! And the Princess Irene told me you were her great-great-grandmother!' (54)

He is bewildered by her physical transformations, but also by her ambiguous moral stance. The pervasive rumours about the malevolent Mother Wotherwop exacerbate the half doubts that plagued Curdie when he was abandoned in the mine. In response, Queen Irene points out the difference between external appearances and underlying essences:

> 'Shapes are only dresses, Curdie, and dresses are only names. That which is inside is the same all the time.' (54)

When Curdie persists in asking for reassurance, for a sign

which would enable him to recognize her in the future, Queen Irene insists that he must perceive the unchanging person inside: "'It would be but to know the sign of me -- not to know me myself'" (57). In order to be certain of Queen Irene's character, to trust her as she asks, Curdie must leave behind his former self, which is accustomed to believing in nothing but what is empirically verifiable and perceptible to the senses. He must exercise his incipient imagination and apprehend the transcendent reality that underlies the mundane.

The extrication of Curdie's eternal self is completed the next evening when he returns to the castle tower. Queen Irene asks him to thrust his hands into a heap of burning roses on her hearth. After enduring intense pain, Curdie removes his hands and discovers that the callouses have been burned away, exposing the sensitive nerve endings underneath. In a sermon entitled "The Consuming Fire," MacDonald asserts that divine love purges so that "all that is not beautiful in the beloved" can be destroyed (*US I*, 28):

> The avaricious, weary, selfish, suspicious old man shall have passed away. The young, ever young self will remain. (*US I*, 44)

The incident with the pigeon was Queen Irene's first test of Curdie. By seeing the bird for what it was, a sentient creature lovingly created by God, Curdie gained access to a deeper stratum of truth. The second interview in the mine tried Curdie's belief in transcendent goodness and prepared

him to meet the two requirements demanded by this third trial: "trust and obedience" (67). In submitting to the fire, Curdie surrenders his right to self-preservation and, thus, relinquishes his hold on his inferior self. Curdie's three cumulative trials have stripped away the "selfish, suspicious old man," the calloused external husk of his soul, and replaced it with a newly emergent primordial self. Curdie's self-made self has been stripped away by purgation; and his divinely-created self has been fostered by imaginative insight into the realm of eternity.

In *The Golden Key*, MacDonald elaborates upon the complementary roles of imaginative insight and purgation in spiritual rebirth. Two children, Mossy and Tangle, journey through life to an eternal afterlife, a Platonic ideal world which can only be perceived on earth as "the constant play of wonderful shadows" (41). Throughout his childhood, Mossy's imagination has been cultivated by his great-aunt, who opened up new vistas for him by telling him stories every evening and instructing him to search for "a golden key" in Fairyland (1). Tangle, on the other hand, has grown up under the jurisdiction of slovenly servants. In the evenings, the servants would abandon her in a locked room:

> The child did not know she was alone, and lay contentedly looking out of her window towards the forest, of which, however, she could not see much, because of the ivy and other creeping plants which had straggled across her window. (11)

Tangle's perception of life has been encumbered by her circumscribed, prosaic life. The names of the children

emphasize their contrasting upbringings. The source of Mossy's name is his habit of sitting on a moss-covered stone "on which he used to sit whole days reading" (30). Tangle received her name because the negligent servants always left her hair in disarray (17).

Tangle and Mossy meet in Fairyland at the cottage of a benevolent, supernatural "Grandmother" (19), a familiar figure in MacDonald's tales. By this time, Mossy has already found the golden key, which symbolizes the faculty of imagination. During the time the children travel together, they age physically: "Mossy's hair was streaked with grey, and Tangle had got wrinkles on her forehead" (41). After they are separated, Mossy goes directly to the house of the Old Man of the Sea, who puts him into a refreshing bath in an inner cave. Although the water vivifies Mossy, removes all traces of weariness and age, the Old Man tells him that he is experiencing death:

> 'You have tasted of death now,' said the Old Man. 'Is it good?'
> 'It is good,' said Mossy. 'It is better than life.'
> 'No,' said the Old Man: 'it is only more life. -- Your feet will make no holes in the water now.' (68)

Mossy's bath is a type of purgation, a moral ablution that prepares him for his ascension into eternity. No longer subject to the mundane world, he walks across a lake and finds a keyhole in a rock. With his golden key, Mossy removes the rock barrier and gains access to the empyrean land beyond the rainbow.

Because of her limited perception of life, because she lacks the golden key of imagination, Tangle has to take a more difficult, circuitous route to "the country from whence the shadows fell" (41). She visits the Old Man of the Sea and bathes in the inner cave like Mossy, but is then instructed to descend a winding staircase in the earth. When she arrives at the cave of the Old Man of the Earth, he in turn orders her to throw herself into a great hole which goes even deeper into the earth. She plummets through floods and fierce heat to another cave, the home of the Old Man of the Fire. After her intense purgation, Tangle finally gains the imaginative insight that Mossy has had all along:

> She had a marvellous sense that she was in the secret of the earth and all its ways. Everything she had seen, or learned from books; all that her grandmother had said or sung to her . . . all that had happened to her on her journey with Mossy . . . all was plain: she understood it all. (59)

However, Tangle's more arduous spiritual rebirth is as valid as Mossy's, for when he arrives at the land of shadows, he finds that she has preceded him: "Seven years had she sat there waiting" (73). An awakened imagination may shorten purgation, but both are necessary components for resurrection into eternal life.

The theme of purgation and resurrection in *The Golden Key* is reiterated in the analogous experience of the air-fish in the fairy grandmother's cottage. In Fairyland, Tangle encounters a curious creature which "[swims] through the air as a fish does through water" (13). After the air-fish leads her to the cottage, it throws itself into a

pot of boiling water. When Tangle is reluctant to eat the cooked flesh of her guide, she is told that will be fulfilling its greatest desire:

> 'the ambition of the animals is to be eaten by people; for that is their highest end in that condition.' (25)

By willingly immolating itself, by offering itself up to be consumed, the air-fish emerges into a higher form of life: "A lovely little creature in human shape, with large white wings, rose out of [the pot]" (26). The metamorphosis of the air-fish into an aeranth encapsulates MacDonald's idea of dying into life.

In his biography of his father, Greville MacDonald reluctantly reports a perplexing favorite saying of MacDonald's early years: "I wis we war a' deid! [I wish we were all dead!]" (*GMW*, 84).[18] Greville attempts to vindicate his father by offering an explanation for this apparent morbidity:

> I surmise that whenever he uttered it, it must have been in the sense that, only when we are dead shall we be alive enough to understand. (*GMW*, 84)

Greville's apologia is somewhat inadequate, because he has not fully comprehended MacDonald's complex conception of death. The moment of physical death, for MacDonald, is merely a milestone in a continuum of growth that stretches

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[18] Greville admits that he never actually heard his father utter these words. He derives his information from an interview with his father's cousin Helen MacKay, with whom MacDonald had an intimate friendship in his youth:

> She said a favorite saying of his then was, "I wis we war a' deid!" and that he often repeated it in after life. (*GMW*, 84)

throughout and after life on earth. MacDonald's expressed desire for the death of all humanity is a desire for the death of all that keeps man from eternal life, the death of a self-made, inferior self, the death of a limited, mundane existence, the death of death itself. MacDonald unabashedly makes such a radical claim, because he believes that such a death is really a beginning, the birth of a divinely-created, primordial self, the inception of life as God meant it to be.

IV. Forgotten Cornerstones

Despised! Rejected by the priest-led roar
Of the multitude! The imperial purple flung
About the form the hissing scourge had stung,
Witnessing to the naked truth it bore! . . .
Never but thee was there a man in sooth,
Never a true crown but thy crown of thorn!

Concerning Jesus, Sonnet XVIII, *Poetical Works*, I

In MacDonald's theology, the accession of a single individual to his eternal identity is only a partial victory. Because of His loving nature, God cannot be satisfied with anything less that the spiritual resurrection of all humanity:

> for this will the patience of God labour while there is yet a human soul whose eyes have not yet been opened, whose child-heart has not been born in him. (*US I*, 29)

MacDonald believes that God's perception of reality is an absolute standard of truth. In "The Final Unmasking," he argues that God's desire for a universal vision of His truth has a threefold application. First of all, it "[enforces] the duty of those who have received light to let it shine" (*US III*, 230). The regenerated believer has a responsibility to assist in the spiritual enlightenment of his fellow human beings. Secondly, the unveiling of absolute truth "[brings] to bear on hypocrisy, showing its uselessness" (*US III*, 230). MacDonald defines hypocrisy as "the desire to look better than you are; the hiding of things you do, because you would not be supposed to do them" (*US III*, 231). The recalcitrant, evil, unregenerate person will be measured against God's standard of truth and judged. The third application of God's desire for truth is solace for the misunderstood, persecuted believer:

> Let him comfort himself with the thought that the truth must out. He will not have to pass through eternity with the brand of ignorant or malicious judgement upon him. (*US III*, 235)

The final facet of MacDonald's inverted value system is an

extrapolation of his argument on the revelation of truth. He uses these ideas to criticize mundane society and redefine the concepts of authority and worth. He considers the conventional criteria for leadership, wealth, status and power, to be deceptive disguises that are doomed to be exposed. The true leader, for MacDonald, is the individual who shares God's vantage point, the individual who has undergone the interior growth process of purgation and resurrection.

The requisite complement in MacDonald's scheme of interior growth is the translation of insight into action. In "A Sketch of Individual Development," he describes the psychological growth of a hypothetical man from infancy to maturity in terms of a series of births. After his physical birth, the child experiences a second birth when "from consciousness he passes to self-consciousness" (*DO*, 45). He begins to notice and interact with the material world around him. The third birth is the inception of imaginative insight. The individual becomes aware of a supernal "Will" in opposition to his desires and develops a sense of moral rectitude:

> And now he not only knows, not only knows that he knows, but knows that he knows that he knows -- knows that he is self-conscious -- that he has a conscience. With the first sense of resistance to it, the power above him has drawn nearer, and the deepest within him has declared himself on the side of the highest without him. (*DO*, 46)

The final step in the man's growth is "the birth in him of the Will -- the real Will" which enables him to act upon his

insight into the transcendent realm:

> When the man, listening to his conscience, wills and does the right, irrespective of inclination as of consequence, then is the man free, the universe open before him. He is born from above. (*DO*, 48)

The individual who undergoes this fourth birth will be unable to conform to a mundane society comprised of unregenerate men "swayed of impulse, selfishness, or one of many a miserable motive" (*DO*, 47). He will stand out as an attestant of eternity, a solitary prophet motivated by the principles of God.

In addition to imaginative insight, men who speak with the authority of God must have the quality of humility. The prototype of MacDonald's fictional prophets is the Biblical Jesus Christ, who has set an example of selfless sacrifice:

> [Christ] made himself what he is by *deathing* himself into the will of the eternal Father. . . . This life, self-willed in Jesus, is the one thing that makes such life -- the eternal life, the true life, possible. (*US III*, 12)

MacDonald argues that "it is *like king like subject*" in the kingdom of heaven. (*US I*, 14). By eschewing the conventional methods of attaining power, all who emulate Christ will become rulers in eternity:

> Jesus is a king in virtue of no conquest, inheritance, or election, but in right of essential being; and he cares for no subjects but such as are subjects in the same right. His subjects must be of his own kind, in ~~their very nature~~ and essence kings. . . . The Lord's is a kingdom in which no man seeks to be above another: ambition is the dirt of this world's kingdoms. (*US III*, 100)

MacDonald complains that Christ, the one man who truly merits exaltation and worship, the sole human being to

achieve equality with God "*in what is most precious in Godhead, namely, Love*" (*US III*, 4), would be rejected as "a poor imposter" if he were to reappear on the earth (*US III*, 39). In the Bible, a similar lament is ascribed to Christ:

> Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner. (Matthew 21: 42)

Individuals who share Christ's resurrection, His authority and His eminence must also share his lack of recognition. MacDonald insists that commonplace men will inevitably "use the servants of the Master despitefully" (*US III*, 233). The regenerated believer, the true leader in society, like the Biblical Christ, is an overlooked "cornerstone."

In *The Princess and Curdie*, Curdie gains the insight and humility necessary for his prophetic vocation through the course of his spiritual regeneration. Queen Irene explains to Curdie that the trial of the rosefire has given him the ability to discern "the greatest of all differences" between human beings, the direction of their interior growth:

> '[the rosefire] has made your hands so knowing and wise, it has brought your real hands so near the outside of your flesh gloves, that you will henceforth be able to know at once the hand of a man who is growing into a beast; nay, more -- you will at once feel the foot of the beast he is growing, just as if there were no glove made like a man's hand between you and it.' (70)

After Curdie is purged of the "glove" which masks his divinely-created identity, the calloused external husk of his inferior self, he is able see from the vantage point of eternity, to penetrate superficial appearances and view

others as God views them. To use his newly-acquired percipience, Curdie must empty himself of all self-interest and ambition: "if anyone gifted with this perception once uses it for his own ends, it is taken from him" (71). The gift depends upon touch, the least cognitive of the senses. Queen Irene warns Curdie that he must never take pride in his own mental abilities:

> 'I have one idea of you and your work, and you have another. . . . you must be ready to let my idea, which sets you working, set your idea right.' (75)

Because he has been purged, Curdie now has the authority *to purge*. He is sent to root out corruption in the king's palace and the surrounding city of Gwyntystorm.

Curdie's spiritual progress is reflected in his geographical route to the palace. After a hostile reception at Gwyntystorm, he is unjustly imprisoned for slaying a dog which threatens his life. Behind loose stones in his cell, he discovers a secret tunnel which leads to the bank of a subterranean river. Curdie descends the cleft with his rope and enters the palace through "an opening on the opposite side" (116). After crawling in an underground passage for a considerable distance, he finally reaches "a short flight of steps," which lead up to the king's wine cellar (118). The grueling descent that precedes Curdie's ascent is a variation on the recurring motif, in MacDonald's work, of ascending staircases which symbolize man's transcendence and his arrival in eternity:''

'' Greville MacDonald cites a letter in which his father declares, "I have a passion for stairs." Greville points

> Oh, I will climb the stair
> Of the great universe and lay me there
> Even at the threshold of [God's] gate. (*PW*, II, 314)

In order to attain true authority, which can only be granted by the omnipotent God, Curdie must follow His prescribed route, the unfrequented, hidden path of humility.

Curdie's experience of elevation through abasement is shared by his bizarre band of coadjutors. During his trial with the rosefire, he meets Lina, a hideous creature, whose body is a "horrible mass of incongruities" (73). When Curdie touches her with his sensitive hands and detects "the soft, neat little hand of a child!," Queen Irene asseverates that, from Lina's paw, he might learn "the whole of natural history [of] the heavenly sort" (73). Lina is evolving spiritually, in the process of becoming a regenerated, childlike being. On their journey to Gwyntystorm, Lina proves her true worth by sacrificing herself to rescue Curdie from a flock of vicious birds:

> she was in far worse plight than he -- plucked and gashed and torn with the beaks and claws of the birds. . . . Lina was no beauty certainly, but already, the first night, she had saved his life. (87-88)

After the attack, Curdie and Lina are joined by "forty-nine

''(cont'd) out, in his discussion of his father's conception of symbolism, that stairs are a favorite image of transcendence for MacDonald:

> So also may we find co-substance between the stairs of a cathedral spire and our own "secret stair" up to wider vision. (*GMW*, 482)

In addition to the staircase scenes in *The Princess and the Goblin* and *The Princess and Curdie*, the motif of man ascending a staircase to enter the presence of God recurs in MacDonald's poetry and sermons. See *PW*, I, 3; *PW*, I, 255; *PW*, II, 93; *US III*, 245.

of the most grotesquely ugly, the most extravagantly abnormal animals imagination can conceive" (90). In the palace, Curdie realizes that his companion once was a human being and that her repulsive appearance is a type of penance for past deeds: "'Lina is a woman [who] was naughty, but is now growing good'" (141). He makes a similar assessment of one the other beasts, the corpulent, spherical "Ballbody":

> [Curdie] could only conjecture that he was a gluttonous alderman whom nature had treated homeopathically. (182)

Like Curdie, the animals have earned authority by submitting to purgation. These unseemly and recognized creatures are actually prophetic leaders, "the avengers of wickedness" (173).

In his satirical portrait of the objects of this vengeance, the dissolute citizens of Gwyntystorm, MacDonald censures characteristics that he believes are endemic in mundane society: selfishness and pride. Upon approaching the city, Curdie is initially impressed with its vulnerability:

> the portcullis was eaten away with rust, and clung to the grooves evidently immovable; while the loophole towers had neither floor nor roof. (95)

The inhabitants of the city have an absurd logic which allows them to feel secure in the apathy of others and in their perilous lack of defence:

> all men said there was no more need for weapons or walls. No man pretended to love his neighbour, but every one said he knew that peace and quiet was the best thing for himself. . . . everybody in the city regarded these signs of decay as the best proof of the prosperity of the place. Commerce and self-interest, they said, had got the better of violence. (94-95)

Ironically, the most obvious trait of these overconfident people is their susceptibility to violence: "there was an unfriendliness in their looks which Curdie did not like" (95). The citizens are so entrenched in arrogance that all they can glean from history is "how much wiser they [are] than their fathers" (95). In place of true spirituality and vital communion with God, the clergy of Gwyntystorm substitute "the dull and monotonic grind of their intellectual machines" (188). In response to Curdie's call for repentance, the first priest reaffirms the basic tenets of their "Religion" of material prosperity and greed:

> The main proof of the verity of their religion, he said, was that things always went well with those who profess it; and its first fundamental principle, grounded in inborn invariable instinct, was, that every One should take care of that One. This was the first duty of Man. (189)

Despite their outward appearance of piety, Gwyntystorm's ostensible spiritual leaders are really men "travelling beastward" (69): "they talked ever about improvement in Gwyntystorm, all the time they were going down hill with a rush" (189). They are inimical to the true spiritual leaders, Curdie and his animals, because they are motivated by values that are antithetical to the divine precepts of humility and sacrifice.

The ending of *The Princess and Curdie* is probably the most enigmatic event in all of MacDonald's fiction. After successfully purging the palace of its slovenly, thieving servants and its treasonous officials and leading a triumphant military campaign against the combined forces of

evil, Curdie is commended by the king and promised the hand of his daughter, Princess Irene, in marriage. Gwyntystorm, under the rule of Curdie and Irene, becomes "a better city," populated by "good people" (219). Up to this point, the narrative has the popular fairy tale ending in which everyone lives "happily-ever-after." The good-hearted peasant boy, who has proven himself with marvellous exploits, wins the lovely princess and the kingdom. However, on the final page, MacDonald departs from this standard ending and undercuts the victory that Curdie has won. Curdie and Irene have no children. After their deaths, the citizens of Gwyntystorm revert to "their old wickedness" and precipitate the collapse of the city by greedily mining for gold under its streets (219). The last sentence of the story takes this note of futility and destruction to the furthest extreme. Curdie's earthly kingdom is even erased from the annals of human history: "All around spreads a wilderness of wild deer, and the very name of Gwyntystorm had ceased from the lips of men" (221).

Various explanations for this abrupt reversal of fortunes have been offered by critics. Rolland Hein suggests that MacDonald means to emphasize "the continual potential of the human will to turn away from God":

> the evil enticement is a lust for gold, which shows the perceptive reader that man cannot serve both God and Mammon. (43)

Nancy Mann argues that "MacDonald is interested in the individual experience of the other world, not in building

the City of God on earth" (197). Stephen Prickett provides both a moral and a topical interpretation:

> At one level the moral is clear. Each advance, each moral achievement is only for those who have come by it the hard way -- by their own labour. One does not inherit spiritual capital for long. . . . The suggestion of the passing of Christendom in the self-destructive greed of nineteenth-century commercial society is unmistakable. (*VF*, 188)

All three of these critics are correct in implying that MacDonald wishes to distinguish between earthly and heavenly achievements, but none of these explanations fully accounts for Curdie's prophetic mission. The intimation that Curdie's ultimate reward is in eternity does not negate the fact that, for a season, he effects changes upon earth, changes which contribute to God's ultimate plan for the redemption of all mankind.

The relationship between private, individual resurrections and universal redemption is expressed by the song of the spinning wheel in *The Princess and Curdie*. In addition to proclaiming the spiritual awakening of individual souls, the refrain line of the song -- "For the day when the sleepers shall rise" (65) -- has a second, cosmological meaning. The ultimate divestiture of false identities will be an apocalyptic consummation of time when the earth itself will be recreated and every human being that has ever lived will be resurrected into eternal life. In his poem "The Clock of the Universe," MacDonald elaborates upon his idea of "Time's Death" and presages a joyous reunion of collective humanity with its Creator in

eternity:

> Then the great old clock to pieces will fall. . . .
> And up the stair will run as they please
> The children to clasp the Father's knees.
> O God, our father, Allhearts' All,
> Open the doors of thy clockless hall! (*PW*, II, 93)

Existence in the temporal is portrayed as a series of vicissitudes and disappointments:

> Each tick is a hope, each tack is a fear,
> Each tick is a *Where*, each tack a *Not here*,
> Each tick is a kiss, each tack is a blow,
> Each tick says *Why*, each tack *I don't know*.
> (*PW*, II, 91)

In the spinning wheel's song, MacDonald asserts that the eventual replacement of the mundane world by a blissful eternity will be brought about by the labours of the spiritually resurrected:

> The weepers are learning to smile,
> And laughter to glean the sighs;
> Burn and bury the care and guile,
> For the day when the sleepers shall rise. (65)

The regenerated believer, who is attuned to the immutable realm of eternity, is no longer subject to "care and guile." He is able to transcend the vicissitudes of temporal existence both in his own life and in the lives of others, thus bringing mundane society one step closer to "the day when the sleepers shall rise."

The strongest evidence that MacDonald is not solely interested in individual spiritual experience is his treatment of the social role of the regenerated believer in *At the Back of the North Wind*. The only of MacDonald's fantasies with a realistic setting, *At the Back of the North Wind* is addressed to a mundane audience. Diamond, the

central character, lives in an ordinary domestic household, visits an aunt in Sandwich and operates a cab in the streets of London. Even when he travels with the North Wind, a maternal God surrogate who resembles Irene's grandmother, he goes to familiar locations: city streets, an empty cathedral, ships in the sea. The sole supernatural setting, "the country at the back of the north wind," is alluded to indirectly as the narrator passes on "such fragments as Diamond was able to bring back with him" (84). MacDonald uses this fictional participant narrator, who is unable to share Diamond's mystical adventures but still has a spiritual propensity,[20] to traverse the gap between the transcendent and the commonplace. In his descriptions, he attempts to translate supernatural phenomena into terms that an unenlightened reader can relate to:

> the arm of the North Wind was about [Diamond], and he was leaning against her bosom. It is quite impossible for me to describe what he saw. Did you ever watch a great wave shoot into a winding passage amongst rocks? . . . Well, the wind was like that, except that it went much faster, and therefore was much wilder. . . . (52)

The fantastic events in the story are given corresponding practical explanations. Diamond's voyage to the ineffable

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[20] Immediately after Diamond's initial encounter with the North Wind, the narrator intrudes, compares Diamond's experiences to his own and apologizes for his limited imagination:

> things looked so strange about him! -- just as if he had got into Fairyland, of which he knew quite as much as anybody. . . . I have seen this world -- only, sometimes just now and then, you know -- look as strange as ever I saw Fairyland. But I confess that I have not seen Fairyland at its best. I am always *going* to see it so sometime. (11)

country at the back of the north wind can also be seen as the febrile delirium of an invalid:

> When he woke, a face was bending over him; but it was not North Wind's; it was his mother's. . . .
> 'What is the matter, Mother?' he said.
> 'Oh, Diamond, my darling! you have been so ill!' she sobbed.
> 'No, Mother dear. I've only been at the back of the north wind.' (92)

After Diamond recovers from his illness, the North Wind fades out of his life; she does not reappear until the end of the narrative when he is facing death. The central focus of *At the Back of the North Wind* is not Diamond's transcendent experiences, but rather the effects of these experiences in the "real" world.

When Diamond is in the presence of the North Wind, he is in an ultramundane realm from which he learns spiritual lessons. North Wind introduces herself by demanding that Diamond open her "window," a crack in the hayloft wall. When Diamond apologizes for his modest bedroom, she asserts that her criterion for assessing human beings is not wealth, but inner character: "It's not the bed I care about: it's what's in it" (5). North Wind continues to lead Diamond away from his preconceived notions of social rank during their second encounter. She insists that his father, a poor coachman, is actually "a gentleman" and divests herself of the visible signs of her power: "The next instant a young girl glided across the bed and stood upon the floor" (22). When North Wind appears to Diamond a third time as a tiny sylph sliding down a tulip, an even more fragile form, she overtly

emphasizes the difference between ostensible grandeur and actual worth:

> 'If there's one thing makes me more angry than another, it is the way you humans judge things by their size. I am quite as respectable now as I shall be six hours after this, when I take an East Indiaman by the royals, twist her round, and push her under.' (44)

North Wind's purpose is to teach Diamond that true authority is not based upon external status, but upon the moral quality of the soul.

In addition to imparting insight into the interior worth of men, North Wind, an administrator of divine justice, elevates Diamond's understanding of misfortune and hardship. She carries him to an aristocratic home, where she transforms into "a huge wolf" and chastizes a drunken nurse who has been abusing a child in her care (24). In response to Diamond's consternation, she explains the varying spiritual conditions of human beings:

> 'Good people see good things; bad people, bad things. . . . I had to make myself look like a bad thing before she could see me. If I had put on any other shape than a wolf's she would not have seen me, for that is what is growing to be her own shape inside her.' (26)

North Wind justifies the bedevilment of an urchin girl in her ensuing sweep of the London streets with the same excuse: "'Everybody can't be done to all the same. Everybody is not ready for the same thing'" (30). Later, when North Wind declares her intention to sink the East Indiaman, Diamond still has difficulty understanding how the protector of the innocent can also be destructive and cruel: "'Here

you are taking care of a poor little boy with one arm, and there you are sinking a ship with the other'" (50). In MacDonald's thought, the greatest possible kindness that God can show to the unregenerate is to precipitate spiritual growth through purgation:

> . . . justice and mercy are simply one and the same thing . . . such is the mercy of God that he will hold his children in tne consuming fire of his distance until they pay the uttermost farthing . . . and rush home to the Father and the Son. (*US III*, 155)

After North Wind leads Diamond through a sophisticated argument that "there can't be two mes," he comes to believe in her benevolence despite the empirical evidence to the contrary:

> 'How could you know how to put on such a beautiful face if you did not love me and the rest? No. You may sink as many ships as you like, and I won't say another word.' (51)

Under North Wind's tutelage, Diamond realizes that the fierce, punitive side of divine justice is really a manifestation of a higher, far-seeing love.

After Diamond learns to perceive people and events from a transcendent vantage point, he is able to apply the principles of eternity and effect permanent changes in the mundane world. Because he has been taught to penetrate the veneer of social rank, he sees worth in Nanny, the urchin crossing-sweeper, and beseeches Mr. Raymond, a wealthy gentleman, on her behalf. Diamond is instrumental in rescuing Nanny and her crippled friend Jim from indigence and moral corruption on the streets of London; at the end of

the story, Mr. Raymond employs the two orphans on his salubrious country estate. The belief in transcendent goodness that Diamond acquires through the course of his successive encounters with the North Wind empowers him to surmount negative circumstances when he hears a drunken cabman mistreating his family:

> Now the way most people do when they see anything very miserable is to turn away from the sight, and try to forget it. But Diamond began as usual to try to destroy the misery. The little boy was just as much one of God's messengers as if he had been an angel with a flaming sword, going out to fight the devil. (129)

Diamond is a divine emissary who works in conjunction with the North Wind. He prevails against sorrow a third time when he reunites the daughter of his father's employer with her estranged lover. The gentleman, "who had not behaved very well" (92), was chastized during North Wind's sinking of the East Indiaman:

> he had gone through a great many hardships and sufferings since then. But he was not past being taught, and his troubles had done him no end of good, for they had made him doubt himself, and begin to think, so that had come to see that he had been foolish as well as wicked. (181)

Like North Wind, Diamond thwarts Mr. Evans' plans and takes him on an alternate course against his will. When he meets the broken young man while driving his cab, Diamond overrules his instructions and takes him to the home of the languishing Miss Coleman.

In addition to converting misery into happiness in the lives of people he meets, Diamond is a consistent source of comfort and encouragement to his family. He attempts to

relieve his mother's distress over financial difficulties with a hortatory analogy to the Biblical story of the Fall:

> 'I suppose [the snake] was a young one of the same serpent that tempted Adam and Eve. . . . That killing of the snake looks true. It's what I've got to do so often.' (147)

Diamond puts his doctrine of overcoming evil into practice when the family's penury is at its worst. After his father falls ill, he refuses to join his mother in weeping and admitting defeat. Although he is but a child, Diamond rises at the crack of dawn, saddles the horse "with great difficulty" and takes his father's place as wage-earner (161). The narrator of the story accounts for Diamond's precocity and his preternatural goodness by "[venturing] to remind [the reader] once more that Diamond had been to the back of the north wind" (147). Diamond also brings joy into his home by entertaining his young siblings with poetry he gets from dreams:

> When he knew he was coming awake, he would sometimes try hard to keep hold of the words of what seemed a new song. . . . after that he would sing the oddest, loveliest little songs to the baby -- of his own making, his mother said; but Diamond said he did not make them; they were made somewhere inside him. (113)

Diamond is a prophet who can see beyond the limitations of the mundane world, a child visionary who is imbued and inspired by his contact with the supernatural.

In *At the Back of the North Wind* and *The Princess and Curdie*, MacDonald exemplifies his conception of the true social leader. Both Diamond and Curdie merit their divinely-granted authority on the basis of their experiences

in the transcendent realm. Like Curdie, who is imprisoned and ostracized on his vatic mission, Diamond is an unrecognized prophet. His spiritual insight has earned him the title of "God's baby" and the reputation of being "not right in the head" (135). As Douglas Thorpe explains, the final stage in MacDonald's scheme of human development is perpetuation of the cycle of spiritual growth. The regenerated believer pervades the wider sphere of mundane society and enkindles imaginative insight, which, in turn, precipitates regeneration in others:

> Ideally, MacDonald sees a society reconstituted on the principle of spiritual deference, so that the lower natures unconsciously yield to those with the proven ability to inspire them. (Thorpe, 226)

George MacDonald believes in the existence of a hidden, spiritual hierarchy which coexists with and countermands the visible, worldly hierarchy of status and wealth. His panacea for what he sees as the impoverished quality of human life is to reverse current priorities, to replace "the low and the showy" with "the lofty and simple humanities" (*US I*, 22).

V. Conclusion

A fairytale, a sonata, a gathering storm, a limitless night, seizes you and sweeps you away. . . . The greatest forces lie in the region of the uncomprehended.

"The Fantastic Imagination"

In the preface to *Phantastes*, George MacDonald cites and translates three passages from Novalis which encapsulate his theory of literature and his philosophy of life:

> One can imagine stories without rational cohesion and yet filled with associations, like dreams; and poems that are merely lovely sounding, full of beautiful words, but also without rational sense and connections -- with, at the most, individual verses which are intelligible, like fragments of the most varied things. This true Poesie can at most have a general allegorical meaning and an indirect effect, as music does. . . .
>
> A fairy-story is like a vision without rational connections, a harmonious whole of miraculous things and events -- as, for example, a musical fantasia, the harmonic sequence of an Aeolion harp, indeed Nature itself.
>
> In a genuine fairy-story, everything must be miraculous, mysterious, and interrelated; everything must be alive, each in its own way. The whole of Nature must be wondrously blended with the whole world of the Spirit. . . . The world of the fairy-story is that world which is opposed throughout to the world of rational truth, and precisely for that reason it is so thoroughly an analogue to it, as Chaos is an analogue to the finished Creation.

MacDonald's description of the fairytale and his approach to language in his essay "The Fantastic Imagination" attest that he has incorporated Novalis' ideas into his own thought:

> A fairytale, like a butterfly or a bee, helps itself on all sides, sips at every wholesome flower, and spoils not one. The true fairytale is, to my mind, very like the sonata, . . . if [words] can be so used to convey definite meaning, it does not follow that they ought never to carry anything else. Words are live things that may be variously employed to various ends. . . . They are things to put together like the pieces of a dissected map, or to arrange like notes on a stave. Is the music in them to go for nothing? (DD, 118)

Roland Hein comments on the preface to *Phantastes* and notes

that, although MacDonald's narratives are desultory and episodic, they are unified and ordered by "generalized symbolic intention" and "the musical orchestration of themes" (154). Hein argues that "this combination of surface incoherence with underlying harmony" in MacDonald's fantasies echoes his cosmology:

> The "harmony within," the hidden unity and coherence of all things is with God, whose meanings and purpose infuse the entirety of this apparent chaos with a higher order.

Richard H. Reis expounds upon MacDonald's unique perspective on literature by quoting and explicating a passage from *Phantastes* in which Adonos awakes and finds himself in Fairyland:

> I, suddenly, as one who wakes to the consciousness that the sea has been moaning about him for hours, or that the storm has been howling around his window all night, became aware of the sound of running water near me; and, looking out of bed, I saw that a large green marble basin, in which I was wont to wash, . . . was overflowing like a spring; and that a stream of clear water was running over the carpet. . . . (Reis, 88)

Reis argues that this description, with its elaborateness of detail, does not replicate the dream itself, but rather the process of awakening from the dream, the process of readjusting to a mundane reality which is coherent and rational. Like Hein, Reis makes the observation that the basic structure of MacDonald's fiction, in which vagarious dream impressions simultaneously coexist with an attempt to impose order on these impressions, reflects his belief in the transcendent realm of eternity:

MacDonald is putting into practice his own critical

> theory about the invention of other worlds with their own laws, consistent in themselves but quite unlike the laws of this world, and partaking of the nature of that dream world which is our deepest insight into what the afterlife may be like. (89)

MacDonald's purpose in exalting chaos and incoherence above rational sense in his fairytales is to dispel illusions that are enslaving his fellow human beings. We are deceived if we believe that the physical universe is all there is to reality, if we cling to our familiar inferior selves as our only and actual selves, if we emulate the status and wealth of the leaders of society. MacDonald would like us to discover, instead, the ultimate reality of the impossible "dream," the divinely-created selves we were meant to be and the true criteria for social authority. In "A Sketch of Individual Development," he asserts that "the things rumoured" belong to "a *more* natural order" than empirically verifiable phenomena and only seem implausible because men have "hitherto been living in the outer court, not in the *penetralia* of life" (*DO*, 67). The inverted value system of George MacDonald strips away the veneer of order in the mundane world and replaces it with the arcane, abiding, underlying order of eternity.

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